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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KJUS](#) [KIRF](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN IMPLEMENTATION OF ECHR JUDGMENTS ON
SALVATION ARMY AND JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Classified By: DCM Daniel Russell: Reason 1.4(d)

¶1. (U) SUMMARY. In early March, Russia notified the Salvation Army that it accepts the ECHR judgment and will pay the monetary damages awarded. The GOR remains within the 90-day appeal period of the ECHR ruling in favor of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and will likely adhere to its practice of accepting narrow judgments. These cases involved only one of the Salvation Army's 10 local branches registered in Russia, and only one of the Jehovah's Witnesses 408 local registered branches. END SUMMARY.

Salvation Army

¶2. (U) On October 5, 2006, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled in favor of the Salvation Army and awarded monetary damages in the case of "Moscow Branch of the Salvation Army v. Russia" (application 72881/01). In 1999, the City of Moscow had refused to register the local branch of the Salvation Army because of technicalities stemming from their status as a branch of a foreign organization. The Russian Ministry of Justice later had charged that the Salvation Army was a "paramilitary organization," which are banned in Russia. The ECHR ruled that the government had violated the members' freedom of assembly and association (Article 11).

¶3. (C) The GOR in early March informed the Salvation Army that it will pay the 10,000 Euro damages. Alistair Herring of the Moscow Branch of the Salvation Army told us that they were pleased with this outcome and they consider this to be notification of acceptance and compliance by the GOR. Herring said that the Salvation Army will now again attempt to register the organization in Moscow. If the Salvation Army is again denied, it will take this case to court with the ECHR judgment as part of its legal argument. The Salvation Army has registered 10 other local branches throughout Russia.

Jehovah's Witnesses

¶4. (U) On January 11, the ECHR ruled unanimously in favor of the Jehovah's Witnesses in Chelyabinsk (Kuznetsov and Others v. Russia, application no. 184/02), awarding monetary damages of 90,5444 euros. In April 2000, local authorities, led by the chairwoman of the Regional Human Rights Commission, had disrupted and dispersed a JW meeting in Chelyabinsk. The JW lodged a criminal complaint against the commissioner, but the courts refused to hear the case "because the applicants had failed to show a causal link between the Commissioner and Police arrival and the early termination of their meeting." The JW then sued the Russian Federation at the European Court

of Human Rights alleging, inter alia, that the government had violated their freedom of religion (Article 9) and their right to a fair hearing (Article 6). The Russian Federation has until April 11 to accept or appeal the verdict.

¶5. (C) The JW organization in Chelyabinsk is one of 408 local JW organizations registered in Russia. JW representatives told us that their national administrative center in St. Petersburg faces continued legal pressure, but said that this was from local officials, not from the federal government or its policies.

¶6. (U) Prominent Russian human rights attorney Galina Krylova told us that Russia generally complies with the ECHR's narrow rulings and financial awards, albeit often with delays. Based on past practice, the GOR will likely comply with the Jehovah's Witnesses court decision for monetary damages.
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